# Pack Library Oral History Project

Jeanne Creasman Lance

Interviewers: Peggy Gardner and Bill Hart

March 25, 2000

## Side A

Bill Hart (BH): I'd be interested to know about the Creasman family and about your father, I know he lived in Biltmore and what caused you to move there. I know in a telephone conversation you said he worked at the pigeon farm – could you tell me a little bit about your father and mother and your early life?

Jeanne Creasman Lance (JCL): Well they were both born and raised in the Bent Creek area, My grandfather Creasman owned land adjoining what is now the Bent Creek development on Bent Creek Ranch Road. He owned from where he lived all the way to the Brevard Road at one time. And that's where my dad was raised. He had two brothers, Will and Wayne Creasman and a sister, Ethel Shackleford, who lived there on the road after she married. And Uncle Will did too. And my mother was a Carland (?). My grandfather Carland owned all of the land from there – what is now the Bent Creek Development – 365 acres – my mother was born on Avery's Creek and he moved there. He was a logger. And my Grandmother Carland died in 1914 from tuberculosis – I'm sorry, she died in 1912 – and in 1914 he sold that land – which was 365 acres, for $900.

BH: Oh mercy.

Peggy Gardner (PG): What was your father's name?

JCL: My father's name was Oscar. Oscar Franklin Creasman. And when the Radfords (?) sold the Bent Creek property, they got $365,000. They got $1000 an acre. So I think that's really (laughs) – I guess $900 was a lot of money back then, I don't really know. Anyway, he spent the rest of his life, I guess you'd say logging and died in 1937. And my daddy's father – I should know, I should get the Bible to tell you what year he died, I can't remember. Anyway, why Dad and Mom went to Biltmore I really don't know, except that they bought this house that you've seen the pictures of where George lived with them. They lived there until 1936 or 37 and we moved back to Bent Creek. That's where I lived until I married. And Mom and Dad lived there until their last years when they moved back into Asheville, down on Elm Street. And my Daddy died – Mother died in 1961 and Dad in '62. He worked for Mrs. Vanderbilt in the cabinet shop as you saw in that picture. Rob was telling me that George Masa worked there too – I didn't know that.

PG: I don't know that either.

JCL: I don't know where he got his information but if he did I'm sure it was Dad that got him there. As I told you on the telephone somewhere along the line I got the date that George was born – and until I got into this, I didn't realize that he and my Dad were the same age. My Dad was born the 12th of January 1881 and George was born the 20th, 1881. So I thought that was really interesting, somehow in my mind I thought he and Blake were the same age – my brother – of course they weren't. The pictures of Blake as a young boy take care of that. They show that he was not.

BH: Let me be sure. Your father was born January 20th –

JCL: No January 12th –

BH: And George was born January 20th, 1881.

*(100)*JCL: 1881. So that's about it.

BH: And how did George Masa happen – what's your knowledge about how George Masa got here. You told me that he came –

JCL: I have no idea except that I – what I can remember – and Bill, whether this is the truth or something I have got in my mind – he came here because he had TB. He was in a sanitarium somewhere in the Swannanoa Black Mountain Area. And they met him at the pigeon farm. And I don't know a thing about the pigeon farm and I would really be interested to know what that was you know?

BH: That's where your father met him?

JCL: That's were my father and my brother both worked down there.

PG: I don't think I've heard of that either.

JCL: I don't what they – you know, people used to eat a lot of pigeons. Whether that was what they did or not – I don't know.

BH: And George worked at the pigeon farm himself?

JCL: With him - with them. And then he came home to live with my family.

BH: So that would be their first meeting. That's how they first met.

JCL: As far as I know.

BH: And before, will you go on with that - you mentioned to me that George had a brother that was with him.

JCL: Yes

BH: Do you know whatever became of his brother?

JCL: Somewhere in my mind, he went back home. I was always told that George's family was very wealthy. I'm sure they had to be for them to be able come to the United States at that time to go to school.

PG: Do you know where he went to school?

JCL: I surely do not. I do not. Because George fell so in love with the mountains he wouldn't go back so his daddy disowned him, or cut him off. So evidently he had nothing, evidently died with nothing.

BH: Did you know his brother's name?

JCL: No, I surely don't. I'm sorry, I just don't. I wish that I was as interested as I am now and had my family here to ask those things. But this is the way it goes, isn't it?

BH: So George's father disowned him and so he

JCL: He just stayed here.

BH: So George came to live with your family. Did he rent or did he –

JCL: Oh I'm sure he didn't – they didn't have enough to live on hardly –

BH: They just brought him in.

JCL: They just brought him. You can see from some of the pictures my family was poor.

PG: Where was that house in Biltmore?

JCL: It's still there. On Brookshire Street. 615 Brookshire Street. Helen Boone owned it the last time I knew anything about it. My brother-in-law owns the house next to it and lives in the next house. But I don't know who owns it now. I was born there.

BH: You don't know who owns the house now.

JCL: No I don't. Helen Boone owned it the last time I knew anything about it and I have no idea who lives there now.

BH: How many years did Mr. Masa live with your family?

JCL: I can't answer that Bill because I don't really know. From the pictures here, it was before I was born that he left – or maybe I was a baby when he left because I'm in none of these, do you know what I mean? And I was born in 1925 – I don't know how many years – did somebody say he came here in 1915?

BH: The only source I could find about that was an article that said he came here in 1915. If he came here in 1915 –

JCL: He probably live 5 or 6 or 7 years with them – I don't really know.

BH: But George left when you were a little girl?

JCL: Either a baby or before.

PG: We do have some city directory listings that Zoe found for us that show the first listing for him in 1921 and it says "home in Biltmore Park." I think that would be with your family.

JCL: That's what they called it.

PG: And that goes on as Biltmore Park in 1922 and 1923 and then 1924 it said he rooms at the Times Building. Do you know where the Times Building would be?

JCL: Not unless it was uptown. So see that would be the year before I was born.

PG: And then back in 1927 it says "rooms Biltmore Road, Biltmore."

JCL: '27 – so he could have come back to them see and I was a baby and I wouldn't remember it. I have no idea – there is a picture somewhere – made outside the photographic studio on Wall Street –

PG: On Church Street?

JCL: On Church Street.

PG: You gave us a copy of that.

JCL: Did I give you a copy of this one? That's me.

PG: And this is of you? You look to be about four years old –

JCL: Four or five – something like that.

PG: So this would have been right around 1930.

*(200)*JCL: Right before they moved up to the Arcade building. I can remember being in the Arcade building - t that place. I don't know what year they lost it, but it was during the Depression.

BH: Tell me about your brother Blake. When was he born?

JCL: Oh heavens. (laughs). Well he was 21 when I was born and I was born in '25 so what's that?

BH: 1904?

JCL: OK – yes I guess that'd be right.

BH: So he was younger than Mr. Masa. When did they first go into business together? Could you tell me a little bit about Blake's relationship with George Masa and just how they got to be friends and later partners?

JCL: Well I don't know a lot about that Bill other than that I've always heard that they formed this photographic studio and somewhere along the line they told me that it started on Biltmore Avenue and I don't have any recollection of that. The only recollection I have of the one on Church Street is this picture. I don't have any idea how long they were in business. Evidently from what little I have retained, as I said they lost it during the Depression. A Mr. Fisher – I don't whether he bought it or how he got a hold of it – and I think this an interesting thing, too – Peggy may not know who I'm talking about and you may not know who I'm talking about – do you remember Juanita Wilson?

BH: I do.

PG: I've done some research about her.

JCL: Well Blake and George are the ones that trained her and got her started.

PG: Oh that's interesting. Thank you. Do you know who trained George and Blake? Was your father involved?

JCL: I have no idea. Dad was strictly a carpenter. No have no idea. I suppose George did. He just like photography and I guess that's how they got started.

BH: But they worked together – what about –

JCL: And my sister Blanche was there too. She did – as you see in this old book here. That was the beginning of coloring – so this is from my mother's hydrangeas and evidently she did that.

BH: Your sister Blanche did?

PG: And how old was your sister when you were born?

JCL: She was twenty-four and had a year and a half old child. Somebody has done all this in this book – this had never been taken care of as you can see.

PG: Most family albums aren't.

BH: That was Blanche Creasman –

JCL: Moore. She was a Moore.

BH: She worked with George Masa and Blake.

JCL: She sure did - for I don't know how long. Evidently not a long time because she was married and had a child a year and a half old when I was born and I was born in '25. And she was married to George Hanford Moore – and I think this is interesting – he was a first cousin to Babe Ruth.

BH: Oh is that right.

JCL: His mother was a Ruth. Her brother was the daddy of Babe Ruth. Isn't that interesting?

PG: It's a small world.

BH: After your brother Blake and Mr. Masa lost the business what kinds of work did he do in other parts of his life?

JCL: I don't know. Blake ended up - he was an electrician his last years. What did he do before then? Isn't that stupid, I can't think – maybe his son could tell us –

BH: Was he an electrician in Asheville?

JCL: Yes he had his own business. He used to work for – he started out with – my brain stopped.

PG: What's Blake's son's name?

JCL: Frank Creasman. He works with the telephone office and the telephone company. I know that's man's name like I know my own. He owned a very prominent electrical company here then Blake went out on his own. Slanger (?) – you remember the name Slanger. That's who it was. It finally comes to me about 3 hours later. (laughs)

BH: When did Blake die? How long has he been dead?

JCL: Well what I need to do is get my Bible. Blake was only 64 I think when he died. He and my dad both smoked and died both of them from emphysema.

BH: You say he was 64 when he died?

*(300)*JCL: I think he was 64. Isn't this terrible – I don't have any of them down. Not when you were born or died. That's awful.

BH: That's OK – he would have died about 1968 then – and so they met with your family and they worked together in the photographic work and they did that about the time of the Depression. George lost his studio then and at that point they went on their own separate ways and ultimately Blake became and electrician and spent the rest of his life departed from photography –

JCL: Yes he never went back to it and what did George did after that I really don't have any idea.

PG: I think he still took pictures for a while but he died in 1933.

JCL: He didn't live too long after that.

BH: Well some of the research that I show - he sold his business to a fellow named Don Topping. Ever heard of him? I couldn't find much about him. Mr. Topping apparently had worked a while at the Chamber and he brought it back and apparently Mr. Topping went bankrupt and so he had to buy his business back to get his negatives.

JCL: So then when did Fisher get a hold of it?

BH: I think Fisher got hold of it after George died. I think that Mr. Fisher ended up buying the negatives. One of the things we talked about the other day – that Ms. Lance knew is that some of Mr. Masa's photographs apparently were used by Mr. Fisher.

JCL: He put his name on them.

BH: He put his name on them but didn't give credit.

JCL: Didn't give him any credit. I've seen in the past, as I was telling Bill – and the next time I see Joe Swicegood who is at the Little Pigs – he used to have two of them in that little hallway thing and they're not there any more – they were George's pictures but they had Fisher's name on them.

PG: Where they some of those larger blow-ups that Mr. Fisher would do?

JCL: No these were about like this – they were long pictures of the mountains.

PG: Panoramic.

JCL: And my nephew said that he has – we had some – Mom and Daddy some of them and what happened to them I don't know. Frank said he has some that are like – they should be put together – they're not framed – do you know what I mean? I haven't seen them.

PG: We're trying to work a key to a little numbering system that we see on a lot of George Masa's prints – do you know anything about how that system came about?

JCL: I surely don't. And I have no idea where this is at – do you have any idea Bill?

BH: I have looked at that closely and I couldn't recognize it. I have wondered if could be Hickory Nut Gorge because he took photographs there but he also took photographs up around Linville too.

JCL: I've wondered if this wasn't down – did I give you some of the ones where he was on Chimney Rock?

PG: Yes we do have those.

JCL: To me this looks like maybe that's it with the Broad River.

BH: That's what – I wondered about that too.

JCL: I've thought that too – but I have no idea about the numbering system at all. I surely don't.

BH: I've looked at the mountains all my life and when I see something like that I feel like I've seen it.

JCL: Well we don't look at it from this perspective for one thing. We're down there on that little highway –

BH: That's right. It's hard to do that.

JCL: So it makes it a little different.

PG: Are these the ones you were talking about of Chimney Rock?

JCL: Uh-huh.

PG: Do you know – there are some people in these pictures I was wondering if you know who any of these people might be?

JCL: Nope – and this is at Chimney Rock too. But I have no idea – no idea whatsoever. Of course you can see the rock very plainly. And did I give you the one that George is standing on the rock it looks like making pictures?

PG: Where he is taking a picture – and there's one other person there and that's who I was curious who that other person might be.

JCL: No I can't help you at all on any of these. See this is 1920 or 28? 20. This one is the (something?) studio – see it's marked there. Now he doesn't have a number on it.

PG: Some of them don't have numbers. Some of them have a 0 as the first number an then others have a number as the first number.

JCL: Whoever that is, he's looking through the binoculars isn't he? Rather than taking pictures. And that's not Chimney Rock. And I don't know where it is.

BH: I told Peggy that I thought that was – I thought that might be Shinning Rock – over in Pisgah National Forest. That sort of looks like the quartz outcrop.

JCL: Could be. I have no idea who the man is – who the other man is. It's not Blake, I can tell you that.

PG: Well since we're doing this photo id maybe if you don't mind if I hand you few other ones and I'll give a number – if you can tell us if you know anybody. This one is MA006-4 and it shows George with a woman. I'm not sure who that would be.

JCL: It's none of my family.

PG: And this is MA013.

JCL: That's my cousin Leila. Her mother died when she was 9 months old and my Mother and Daddy took her and raised her so she was like a sister.

PG: What's her last name?

JCL: Medling. And this is by the old house at Biltmore in the yard.

PG: We do have a series right there in the yard. Of course this is your brother Blake with George. And in this one, MA005.

JCL: That's my sister Doris, made in the same yard.

PG: MA0174 shows the group of girls playing jump rope.

JCL: Alrighty – this is Doris on the right, that's my sister Ruby in the jumping rope. I don't know who these children are, they probably were just neighbors.

PG: Now can we date that photo.

JCL: I tell you how you can date it very easily. I gave you a picture of the old schoolhouse that stood at the end of Brookshire Street and burned down. OK? This is schoolhouse that was built to take the place of this one. And this is the old grammar school at Biltmore.

PG: On the same site where Biltmore school is?

(*400*)JCL: Where the Biltmore school is that they're trying to save. It was right beside of it. It's torn down now. I went to school there too – we all went to Biltmore school. But I don't know what year it was built in. But you could date it fairly close if you found out what year they built it.

PG: And this is your sister? And she looks about seven or so.

JCL: This is my sister Doris.

PG: How old were they in relation to you.

JCL: I was born the 15th of June and Ruby was 17 on the 18th. And Dot was 11 when I was born.

PG: You were the baby.

JCL: Yes the baby and the only one left. But this was at the back of our house and you could look straight over – you're practically even with Hendersonville Road. You could date that if you found out when the schoolhouse was built. I should know but I don't remember.

PG: Here's George with your family on the porch – I'm trying to figure out how we could date this also – MA010 and MA011

JCL: This is George and my brother Blake and my Dad and my sister Blanche and Doris and Leila and Ruby. This is the whole family except for me. It probably was around the early twenties, 1920 or 1921. I would say that it is.

PG: We have this one artistic photo – MA020.

JCL: Isn't that wonderful?

PG: Isn't that beautiful? Did you remember a lot of your family photographs that he did being like that?

JCL: Well I've looked at them over the years. No this particular one I pointed out to Rob I though it was so interesting. This is my sister Blanche and my sister Ruby. The way he has done it he's done it they're reflected in the mirror.

PG: Bill pointed out to me that they're holding a camera which I hadn't noticed before.

JCL: Yes Blanche is – she is. So evidently she was into it somewhat too.

PG: MA008 shows George beside a – did you tell me that was a stream and there's someone in the background – do we know who that is?

JCL: I don't have any idea who that is – I surely don't.

PG: And then we had a story on this photograph – MA004. It shows George at the ocean next to a boat and on the back, in very faint writing we were able to make out – I think it says "1926 Grandview, Virginia" and then I think he might have written this "The sun too strong. I could not smile." It also has the name Blanche on it.

JCL: She lived up through there somewhere so he might have been up there visiting.

PG: That's where Blanche lived?

JCL: I'm trying to think. Boston. She lived in Boston I remember. But I don't know about Virginia.

PG: That might have been a vacation place.

JCL: Might have been. See I have one it's at the ocean and her name's on the back of it too.

PG: And it written the same way so those were probably taken at the same time – the same format. Yours shows a canoe, George sitting on a canoe.

JCL: It's a little different. These could have been taken at the same time, he's got the same bathing suit on.

BH: Let me ask you about this one MA0075 – was that in your home?

JCL: Yes I think it was. I think it was probably in whatever room he had upstairs. I could be mistaken – I could be when he was up on Pack Square.

PG: He looks pretty young in that photo.

JCL: So that's why I think it's probably at Biltmore.

BH: This is the photo of your father that appeared in the paper MA14.5 – would that have been on the Biltmore Estate you'd think?

JCL: No it was in the Village. Mrs. Vanderbilt brought all of these people from Italy to teach the men here all this fine woodworking. This was the cabinet shop – they called it the cabinet shop. It was located somewhere in the Village – and that's Dad.

BH: Seeing his work – you showed us the beautiful box and the beautiful picture frame – with his obvious talent – do you know whether any of George Masa's work survived – anything that anyone could point to and say that George Masa –

JCL: I did not even know that he ever worked there until I think Rob is the one that told me somewhere along the line you all had figured that out. I did not know but I presume that because my Dad was there and probably he took him to have a job too. But no I sure don't Bill, I don't know a thing about it.

BH: Are these your family? MA018.5

JCL: This is Ruby, that's Blanche, that's Doris – no wait a minute, this is Leila, Blanche, Doris and Ruby, my sister Ruby. And this is made on the Biltmore Estate.

BH: Reading left to right. Oh that's wonderful. Do you happen to know – other than Mr. Masa in this photograph – that's MA009-5

JCL: I don't know a one of them. I sure don't. I wondered if any of them was Kephardt (?) or Mitchell. I don't know what they looked like

BH: No I know what Mr. Kephardt looked like and I don't know any of the other people there?

JCL: Do you think Rob's article about the Amblers – do you think maybe this is some of the Amblers that went hiking with them

BH: It might have been but I showed that to Barbara Ambler Thorn, who was also one of the people that I interviewed and she didn't know any of them. She couldn't remember – she thought one of them was a fellow by the name of Walter McGuire but we couldn't be sure about that.

JCL: I surely don't –

BH: Do you know any of the folks in that photograph? MA016-5

JCL: This was made on the Old Brevard Road. This is no longer standing. This is my great uncle Kerry (?) Morris, his wife and his daughter.

BH: Reading from right to left.

JCL: Yes his wife and his daughter – can't think of her name – Uncle Kerry I remember very distinctly. His horse and (something)

BH: Looks like a fine rig.

JCL: I don't know whether you're familiar with land on Brevard Road – where Tom Thrash owns – right below the Mountain View Restaurant – those fields of corn thru there – that all belonged to him, to Uncle Kerry. Tom Thrash owns it now. But the house set on the old piece of Brevard Road that's still there – where they made the flea market that didn't make a go? That's where the house was. And he was a brother to my Grandmother Creaseman. She was a Morris.

BH: You say that's – which side of the road – did it sit out near the Mountain View restaurant?

JCL: You go in behind the Mountain View Restaurant, where you turn to go out where they made the flea market, you turn just below that. It's up on that bank. That's where it sat – it's been gone for many years.

PG: This handsome group of people. It looks like it's outside of a school or a church.

*(500)*JCL: It's the old Biltmore Church. It was a Methodist Church, Biltmore Methodist. It's still standing down there and I think it's some kind of fellowship hall – I don't remember. But this was my mother's Sunday School Class when we lived in Biltmore. And I know a few of them. This is Mr. Reese, I'll think of his name in a minute.

PG: And he's at the top left in the back. Is your mother in here?

JCL: No she isn't and I always think that was rather odd. And this is Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Williams that had the A.C. Williams Plumbing Company in Asheville – I don't know who this is – this is a Mr. Edgeworth –

PG: He's on the far right.

JCL: This is Mary Reese, the wife of him. This is Alley (?) – isn't it funny I think - Vance was her husband. This is Sol, Sol Reese and Mary Reese. This is Alley and I can't remember - her husband was Vance, I think it's either this one or this one. I think it's this one.

PG: These were friends of your mother's?

JCL: Yes this is Nell Bryson Lipe (?)

PG: She's right in the middle.

JCL: Her daughter-in-law was buried yesterday.

PG: What's her name?

JCL: Her name was Sarah O'Brien Carlin (?). She married Red Carlin, they lived in the gatehouse at the Biltmore House for years and years. She was raised up on West Chapel Road and married Red Carlin – is what they always called him.

PG: Was he the gatekeeper for the Biltmore Estate?

JCL: I don't know what he did over there. I don't really remember that. I'll have to tell you an interesting story, you can erase this, about Alley –

PG: Do you want us to put it on pause? It's easy to do.

*Tape Paused*

JCL: (Laughter) Unless he is still living he's never lived it down. That got all over Biltmore school and oh mercy mercy mercy –

PG: That's pretty good – the poor rabbits.

JCL: I've always thought that was so funny. Isn't it funny what you remember.

PG: It's selective. Are these more of your family pictures?

JCL: Yes some of them are. We decided – I have no idea who this is, this is my Aunt Alice. She's the sister to the man who was in the cart.

PG: This beautiful how it's hand decorated.

JCL: Just the first part of it. This was made at the Biltmore Estate. This is all the girls. And this is Leila and Blanche – look at the way that one is done.

PG: Who do you think took most of these snapshots of your family.

JCL: George. I'm sure he did.

PG: We were wondering about that. He just always had a camera.

JCL: Evidently he always had a camera.

PG: These are great pictures too.

JCL: I have no idea where this is.

PG: Snow scene – almost kind of ice covered. That almost looks like it could be on the Biltmore Estate – one of their farm buildings or something.

JCL: Could be. And this is Blake. I have no idea who that child is.

PG: We wanted you to tell us more – I know you talked about your father working in the library at the Biltmore Estate.

JCL: He did a lot of the carving –

PG: The carvings there in the bookcases –

JCL: Yes. Now what part of it he did I don't know.

PG: We could probably take a look at that box and go over there and figure it out – I don't know.

JCL: I'm sure he and several men together did it. But I was always told and stop your tapes a minute –

*Tape Paused.*

BH: Nothing that you don't want said will be done.

JCL: And this is George with dot. This is a good one.

PG: That's a good one. Who is he with there?

JCL: It's Dot, my sister Doris. I think.

PG: I wonder what that building is there. Looks like a gazebo or something.

JCL: I have no idea. That looks like them too. George and...I don't know. Well here I am. Because I've got a picture somewhere -

PG: You have that same outfit or something?

JCL: No that's not me. Who is that? Well like it looks like some of my baby ones. But I don't have any idea who these people are. I don't see well anymore.

PG: Did any of your children or Blake's children carry on with photography at all?

JCL: No

PG: And what about the negatives of Blake's? Was his only business with George Masa?

JCL: Yes.

PG: I had heard his name for years and I thought he kind of had his own business too.

JCL: No. As far as I know, no.

PG: Do you know if he had a special kind of picture he liked to take?

JCL: No. Just whatever they were into.

PG: Was he a hiker too? They like to get out into the mountains and take pictures.

JCL: I really don't know. Probably. They seemed to spend – according to these pictures an awful lot of time on the Biltmore Estate – didn't they – making pictures and looking around and whatnot.

PG: Probably because your Dad was working there.

JCL: Probably. I remember when – see my brother was 21 when I was born and he didn't marry until he was in his thirties. But anyway I can remember this because my mother got so upset – whoever heard tell of such thing – but he and Hubert Hayes – do you know Hubert Hayes is? Was?

BH: Yes he's the one that started the youth folk festivals in Asheville.

JCL: They rode to New York City on a motorcycle. And my mother nearly had a fit. They were going to get killed, they'd never be back home – but I've always thought that was real interesting.

PG: I guess it was all two lane roads too.

JCL: Or maybe there even wasn't a road. (laughs) He and Hubert rode up there on a motorcycle. Which was a big deal.

BH: Oh I can imagine. One of the things I had wondered is to your knowledge did Mr. Masa ever go on dates or have a romantic interest.

JCL: I have no idea. Evidently not. I mean I don't know whether he did or not but he evidently never married.

BH: No, not that I'm aware of either.

JCL: Not that I'm aware of either

BH: Do you have any awareness of him being in any kind of trouble or anything like that? As far as you could tell was well accepted? I've always wondered – there probably couldn't have been very many Japanese here in Western North Carolina.

JCL: I've wondered about that too Bill. I don't know. I don't know if his living with my family caused them any problems. I wondered about that because people – you know, Blacks or Hispanics or whatever were not very accepted in this part of the country back in those days. So I don't know, I really don't know. I never heard my sister or any of them ever say anything, you know, about that – cause people might have come looked down on them because they took him in.

BH: There's nothing in anything in his life to make me think he had difficulty because he was well accepted and in his later life he was very active the Appalachian Trail movement and hiking club movement here.

PG: The camera was a very good introduction. Did you family consider him a real talent as a photographer?

JCL: No I guess they accepted it as whatever he did – as far as I know.

PG: As a craftsman in that, as your father was in something else.

JCL: As far as I know. As I said I wish I could go back and ask them a lot of things. And I didn't.

PG: I wish I could do that too.

JCL: Well when you're young – Mom and Dad had a lot of old furniture – I didn't that stuff, I wanted something new. And now, my gracious.

BH: Now you appreciate it.

JCL: And it's the same way things that happened. You know you hear them and it's old hat. And then when you get old like I am you wished you'd asked a lot of questions.

BH: I'm the same way – things get away from us.

JCL: You just never think about that. And just like my kids now – they could care less about this.

PG: But they'll be sorry later. (laughs)

*(600)*JCL: That's why I was so happy to have a place to give some of his stuff because this will all go in the trash.

PG: We really appreciate it. As things go over time interest does develop and there are very few clues to some of this stuff. We thank you for providing us with some clues. I have two more questions that I don't know it there – in 1920 and 1921 there was a man listed as a photographer in the city directories and the listings is "G. Maruyama" and we thought that could possibly a Japanese name and he's also a photographer, but he's also listed in 1921 when George Masa is listed too. Do you think that could be his brother or does that names ring any bells for you?

JCL: I've never heard it before but it certainly could because I don't know when he went back or if he came here with George –

PG: Or if he might have changed his name at any point? Had you ever heard that?

JCL: No

PG: My other question was he was listed early on with Herbert Pelton in business – do you know anything about Mr. Pelton?

JCL: Never heard of him. George was in with him?

PG: One of the listings does list them together. And then it's often rumored that that's where George started.

JCL: Could be.

PG: A lot of these photographers seemed to share the same studio or the same addresses over and over.

JCL: It certainly could be. I don't know.

PG: There was one other name – Edwin Pepper. Have you heard of him?

JCL: I've never heard of him.

PG: I think that's all from me.

BH: One of the things I've wondered about is after Blake and Mr. Masa lost the business, they apparently parted around the depression. Did you ever hear Blake talk about Mr. Masa after that or any recollection of that?

JCL: No I never heard him talk about it. If he did he didn't talk to me about it. I don't know. I don't know whether – you know, was with him or any of that I don't know.

BH: I found – and one of the things you wonder about when you read the article is the Asheville Library System has a lot of letters to him and a few things where he was obviously trying to write a letter. So you find a scrap of paper or a fragment of a letter where he was trying to use words. Some of it I think is that he misunderstood what he said. There's a little fragment when he's selling his business and he says something about "I got over the Creasman family." I think he's trying to say in his limited way is that he ended business but I didn't know how to interpret that. Was that a friendly parting or an unfriendly parting.

JCL: I have no idea. I just never heard any of the family, you know, well really discuss it as to why he left. It looks like if it hadn't been a friendly parting somewhere along the line I would have heard something. As far as I know – and why he left I have no idea

BH: The other the thing you told me that I was interested in too was that you went to his funeral.

JCL: Yes

BH: Tell me a little bit about your recollections of that.

PG: I'm going to stop you right here and turn this tape over cause I'd like to make sure I get this.

## End of Side A

JCL: .....cause they're going to be in the trash.

PG: What we could do is take this scrapbook and have negatives made and then return the scrapbook to you. Or take out anything that we thought important.

JCL: Just take some of these cause my kids don't care – they'll just go in the trash.

PG: Well thank you. Now I've interrupted you - you were going to talk about your experiences at his funeral.

JCL: OK. I do not know where the funeral was held. I remember being there, but I don't whether it was a funeral home, a church, I don't know. I have a very, very vivid memory of being at the cemetery because it was pouring the rain.

PG: Is this Riverside?

JCL: Riverside and I could take you right to his grave. I've been there many, many times. I can remember them burying him.

PG: Is he buried near any of your family?

JCL: No. And I don't know why he was buried at Riverside. I really don't.

PG: I knew one of the pallbearers, Anthony Lord. Did you know Mr. Lord?

JCL: I know who you're talking about but I don't know him. I think an interesting thing – I had a very dear friend Mary Young, she lived up the street here, she was a Waltzer (?) And so I went over to Riverside with her one day, for the first time, to put flowers on her daddy's grave actually. He was buried right next to George. It was really an odd – you know, a big coincidence.

PG: Were there a lot of people at his funeral.

JCL: As I remember there was, yes.

PG: I guess he had a lot of hiking friends.

BH: Yes.

JCL: Let's see, I was eight, eight years old when he died. I can remember – you know as a child - there was all these black umbrellas, you didn't have colored umbrellas back then, there was all black umbrellas. And I guess it just made a...

PG: Strong image.

JCL: And I can remember them taking the casket out of the - whatever they took him over there in. Walking down, it's down the hill.

PG: Did you remember anybody speaking there – any members of your family?

JCL: I don't remember anything about that. I think – as one the first memories of funerals. And to see that they were going to put him in the ground – made a great impression on me. But other than that I don't know. I would be interested to know – do you all know what church or funeral home that he was –

BH: I'm going to take a peek here. There's another photograph that the library has from another source that looks like military uniforms – there was a picture there with somebody saluting and it looks like a First World War uniform –

JCL: It is.

BH: Do you know who that is?

JCL: Yes this is my mother's brother, Roy Carland (?). *(apparently sorting thru pictures)* Somebody messed this one up trying to color it – probably Blanche. These are all really good. This is Doris and him, and this is Blake and him roughhousing. You just might as well take them. If I want to see them, I'll come and look at them.

PG: Well thank you. We've actually decided to set aside all of our Masa photographs into a special collection so their easier to retrieve for you and look at. We didn't have enough up until a couple of months ago to do that – this has been wonderful for us. There's only a few photographers in Asheville who've generated this much interest – he may be the most popular one at the moment.

*(100)*JCL: Well I just like to see – like when Mitzi Tessier did the thing about him I was so happy that anything would be written about them.

BH: I'm sorry the church is not there – I'm thinking it may have been Central Methodist.

JCL: I just don't recall.

BH: I had a copy of that obituary notice.

JCL: See, that's me but I have no idea who those people are. See, I had that little hat on?

PG: Right.

JCL: Might have been my mama and daddy. I've gotten to so I can't see very well. Now this is one of George's pictures of my brother and my sister and my cousin that he made in the house.

PG: Oh that's inside your house. That's a nice one. *(discussions on how to get photographs out of albums.)* Now some of these – it this the river?

JCL: This is the 1916 flood.

PG: Those are important too. We have a whole series on those – they're being studied now since it's been such a long time since we've had a flood of that magnitude.

JCL: Are they? If you can get them out you can have these too. These are all of it too. That's the old train station – see if you can get that one out too.

BH: Would the flood photographs you have there been taken by your family or would that have been taken by Mr. Masa?

JCL: I would think it would have been taken by George or Blake or some of them. Do you want a sharper one? That's the old station house and the depot.

PG: Well these are more valuable maybe we shouldn't be ripping them out right now. If you don't mind if I just took this and took them out. And I'd also like to do the same thing we did is ask you who's in this picture –

JCL: Now see this is probably one of George's because it has a number. But now where - I have no idea where that is.

PG: Now the ones of your family we make copies of things and we can have copies made for you too – you're very generous.

JCL: Now this is my dad and that's my sister Dot and of course this –

PG: They're beautiful pictures.

JCL: And this is my mother and my brother Blake and Blanche and this is her brother Roy. She had two brothers in the service – World War I.

PG: So can you tell us what you remember in regards to the flood and your family's house or property?

JCL: Well my house – their house was way way above the river. Way up, they were in no danger. But I've heard them talk about – I can't think of the women's name, you know there were several women who were drowned right there at the bridge. It's that odd – I can't think of their names.

PG: That's a family that your family knew then.

JCL: Yes but other than that just hearing them talking about it.

PG: This is an interesting panoramic of the Biltmore Estate. These are valuable in the history of photography too because we don't take pictures like this anymore.

JCL: That's Blanche – and this is evidently made during the construction of the Biltmore House.

BH: You can always date the Biltmore House by the size of the trees.

JCL: This was the one that Mitzi Tessier used in her book.

PG: It shows him in front of the Biltmore House. That's great. These are wonderful.

BH: Is that in her history of Buncombe County?

JCL: It's in the last book.

BH: Is that right? Somehow I just missed it.

PG: I don't think I've seen that either.

BH: I just saw it and did not know it.

JCL: She came and talked to me very briefly about it and put that in and did a little brief thing about it. This is George and my mother in the yard at Biltmore.

PG: Now that's not Blanche – that's your mother.

JCL: No that's my mother.

BH: Did you ever hear them – the family going to Mount Mitchell. Because there are some other donated photographs by Mr. Masa of Mount Mitchell.

JCL: Well I've cut out everything that's ever been in the paper about him – John Parris used to do a lot of them. So I always cut out everything that I saw about him. This is my daddy's sister – that's Blanche but I don't know who that boy is – it doesn't look like Blake – and my Dad in the background. Could have been.

PG: Is that an elephant?

*(200)*JCL: Yeah, elephant parade.

BH: I know you have some of Blake – but Blake I think is an important person in the overall history of – not just in his association with Mr. Masa but in the history of western North Carolina photography. We tend to place and his is one of the names among the early photographers who contributed.

PG: It's interesting how they were all connected to each other too.

JCL: Well you know it was a fairly new thing to get into – that's the way it went.

PG: Would you mind if I took these to the library and went over them with my boss Ann Wright?

JCL: You just do that and what you want copy – of course some of these of my family I want back.

PG: And some we don't make prints of we just have negatives made in case somebody was doing research.

JCL: This says this is the Swannanoa River at Biltmore. "River is full been raining for week." I thought this one is interesting too. This is the City Hall.

PG: That's one of the best shots of this bridge I've ever seen. It's one of the clearest.

BH: That's the Biltmore Bridge isn't it?

PG: I think it's still there.

JCL: And this is the man and woman with the horses. This is a close-up one.

BH: What handsome people.

JCL: And this is my Granddaddy Carlin, my mother's father.

PG: Some of these have such beautiful lighting in them.

BH: And the significance of that is his corn crop.

JCL: Posing with that big tall corn crop.

BH: Do you have any idea what kind of crop he had?

JCL: And this was his sister and her husband. This was the only grandmother that I ever knew. Both of my grandmothers died – That's Aunt Matt (?) and Uncle Zack (?) Ledbetter. She was a mess. She was a little woman – she died in 1942, I believe it was, and she still wore button-up shoes and long dresses.

BH: She carried the style forward.

JCL: My mother made her dresses.

BH: What can you tell me about those two photographs? This is a man -

JCL: That's my Granddaddy Carlin.

BH: Where would he have been cooking? He's obviously cooking outdoors with a long handled frying pan.

JCL: Well there is no telling because as I told you he was a logger. At one time he had a camp in the Pink Beds. So that could be the Pink Beds.

BH: I just wondered – look at the –

JCL: And this – I have no idea – it just says an old time house typical of the Civil War. An old log house.

PG: This is interesting too – just to see what kind of tents they had.

JCL: This must have been remnants from the flood too maybe. Here it is into where the railroad thing was.

PG: These are good pictures.

JCL: Well I don't know how I ended up with all of the mess.

PG: Maybe you were the one who was interested in it.

BH: You know what you have done is you've given a whole new dimension to George Masa's life.

JCL: That's great – I hope I'm giving you the true thing Bill because you know, it's just memories.

BH: But your memories are singular because no one else has them. And when you see this and - had I known and had the privilege of talking with you before I wrote this the article would be completely different. I think I start like in 1915 and at that point Mrs. Vanderbilt had sold her craft effort to Mr. Sealy who's a brother in law to Mr. Grove who built the Grove Park. That's where the story begins for purposes of the article because that's the only sources you have.

PG: Now we have whole other era –

JCL: A different dimension. Who was it that was telling me that he worked at the Grove Park Inn? That George did? Now see I don't remember that.

PG: We have a picture of the Grove Park Inn that you gave us too.

BH: He worked for Mr. Sealy. But they had no record of him and there was a fellow by the name of Mr. Maxwell who managed the Homespun Shop up there – but he came I think in '74 and he'd heard that Masa worked there but he didn't have any real knowledge of it. But before he came here – you don't really know where he came from. Some said he'd been out west –

JCL: I have no idea where he went to school – as I said all I remember is them talking that he and his brother had come to go to school. Now where I don't know. Why he was here or if he came here because of the tuberculosis I really don't know. And I wish we had some information on this pigeon farm. That has always bugged me.

PG: Maybe we could call up Warren Wilson College and ask if they have any leads on it. They have so many international connections.

JCL: It was on Sweeten Creek Road and –

PG: The pigeon farm was on Sweeten Creek Road? I'm in the wrong neighborhood.

BH: I bet we could go back to one of the city directories and find it.

JCL: In thinking about George in the last few years I've always thought it was rather odd – if he was a recovered TB patient why in the world would he be working around feathers? Maybe they understand a lot about that. I would think that would be a bad place for him to be.

BH: I think I've exhausted my questions.

PG: You've answered more than we could have ever thought up.

*(300)*JCL: Oh mercy mercy mercy. Well I just hope I've helped you and told you what it the truth. You certainly could contradict me if you find out otherwise.

BH: I don't believe so. I don't think anyone can contradict you at all. I just appreciate your time and your generosity with your photographs.

JCL: As I say I'd like for them to be preserved because my kids are not interested and Blake's son is not interested – he could care less. He does have some things – if he ever gets them to me if they're worth anything I'll call and you all can take a look at them or whatever he wants to do with them.

BH: Well certainly the library is the place for that. Maybe they changed – Mr. Masa's association with your family well changed his life in Western North Carolina.

PG: It sounds like it to me.

JCL: Probably did. This is an odd thing too Peggy, look at that. (laughs) I don't know who killed the Kaiser (?) –

PG: I've seen another one like this. This is by Mr. Pelton.

JCL: Have you seen another one of this?

PG: That's an interesting little remnant. Here's our number at Special Collections. We give them to a photographer who takes pictures of them and it takes a couple of weeks – as soon as I can get those done I'll bring them back out here to you.

JCL: Now you don't want any of these I don't think.

PG: Well I'd love to just look thru and let Ann – we have two great historians there at special collections and sometimes they see thing that I would have never thought of. If you don't mine.

JCL: These are of me when I was a baby.

PG: Oh that's a beautiful picture. So he probably took this of you?

JCL: He probably did. I know that I'm six months old in this one. And this was taken out on the old – this is the house my daddy was raised in n Bent Creek Ranch Road. It's no longer there. This is Blake and my cousin Cecil Creasman.

BH: Blake was a handsome young man.

JCL: He was. I don't know who this is up in here but that's the old home place.

PG: Is that a goat in the background.

JCL: Looks like it.

PG: It'd be an awful tall dog – I think it's a goat.

JCL: Where is it at?

PG: Right over here – it's kind of blurry.

JCL: No that's a calf. And this one too. Look at the coat Cecil's got on. He was my Uncle Will's and Aunt Lily's (?) first born child and he was a big, big baby and they ruined his arm during birth. And it was like a child's arm on a huge huge man. It doesn't show, it does a little here – he was a great person. Made a living for his family and everything for years and years. Well good luck, Miss Peggy.

PG: Thank you – I'll be in touch. I've got a lot to deal with here.

BH: I just can't express how important it is – what you've done and your generosity –

PG: We're indebted.

JCL: Not at all. You're just more than welcome.

PG: We could photocopy these articles if you like. They're falling apart aren't they?

JCL: Well how about this one?

PG: Now who is this – the Cecil wedding is it?

JCL: Yes it is.

PG: Now we do have – I wanted to ask you and I'm glad you opened this up – do you know if Masa took a lot of these pictures?

JCL: I don't know if he took any of them

PG: Where did you think that picture came from of Cornelia's wedding?

JCL: I don't know. It was just that book. Just part of that book.

PG: It looks like the style of photographs that he was doing.

JCL: It could have been his – I really don't know.

PG: As I looked up – in order to find out who was in that picture when I was putting it in the database, I looked at all these clippings and found out the name of the bridesmaid and found out that was her mother standing next to her.

JCL: I've even read this thing. Isn't that funny? Do you have a page like this? It's about to come all to pieces.

PG: They have a lot of files about the Vanderbilts but there was a lot – I don't know that we have this one. There was a lot, just when she met Mr. Cecil, I guess they wrote every day in the paper for a long time. It was a big thing.

JCL: Oh I'm sure – it was a big thing. Look here copyright by Plateau Studios, Knoxville Engraving Bureau. This is the clubhouse.

PG: Well there you go. The clubhouse at the Biltmore Forest. They got credit there.

JCL: Who's the Knoxville Engraving Bureau?

PG: I don't know. That's another lead for us. Here's the same one, Plateau Studios.

JCL: I never had even read this.

PG: I hadn't seen that either. I'm going to put that date down and see if we have this one.

JCL: Do you want to take this one?

PG: I think if I take these I'll photocopy them – 'cause they're starting to fall apart aren't they? Let's see if we can keep them from falling apart any more.

BH: What was the date of that?

PG: That's April 30th, 1924. What other ones do you have there?

JCL: That's all. These are the ones that I had cut out of the paper about him and I'm sure you've had all these.

PG: We have a file on him there too.

JCL: These are the ones that mostly John Parris did. This is by Lola M. Love – do you have that one?

BH: I found some of Ms. Love's articles in Western Carolina University Archives.

PG: I'll take this one and photocopy it too.

JCL: Now this is Arch Nichols.

PG: Now I have a copy of this one – I remember that headline. I'm doing some research on another photographer that you might have heard of. Ignatus (?) Brock. He was a portrait photographer. Do remember Mr. Brock?

JCL: I surely don't. This was 1972 – this particular article.

PG: Well I could take all these in a group – it's good time to photocopy.

JCL: Now here's a picture of Horace Gephart (?) so he's not one of those men in that picture – this is 1953 when they were talking about naming a peak after –

PG: And they did that.

JCL: And then they were going to move his body and then something happened –

PG: And they just left it at Riverside. I'll take this group and I'll make 3 copies. One for the library, one for you, Bill and one to bring back to you. That we'll make sure our files...That won't take long. You have kept quite a file.

JCL: Oh this is what G.H. included but he didn't do the first of it. As I told you we found that old cemetery – that has always fascinated me and - Calvin and I for years and Leila the girl that my mother and daddy raised she used to beg me to take her in there to see that and every time she or Calvin got ready to go it was snake time – no way was I going.

PG: Where was this cemetery?

JCL: It's at Sandy Bottoms on Brevard Road. So G.H. and I were talking one day and he said "Well let's go find it Jean" and I said "OK we will." So now some of Calvin's – he collected a lot of old horse drawn farm stuff and I had to sell all of it. I have 8 acres out on Brevard Road – and I had to sell all of his stuff. This man that I sold it to, when he was out there getting them he said "Mrs. Lance you ever been to that old cemetery up here at Sandy Bottoms?" And I said "No but I've always wanted to go." So anyway, G.H. and I made a time that we were going to go and so Donnie called me the evening before - it was really funny – and he said "I'm thinking about going to the cemetery. Do you want to go with me?" Well it turned out he couldn't go – but anyway he told us exactly how to find it. Somebody has bought – and G.H. and I were just absolutely flabbergasted because I never thought about what behind all that. But by the side of Brevard Road it used to just be a swamp – used to be a big beaver dam and all that – well it's still a swap but somebody has bought this acreage and they have build a lodge up on the side of that mountain. Like a Bed and Breakfast and it's beautiful but it's just hanging off – you know. And they've got ten acre plots to sell to build home things. But anyway Donnie told me exactly how to get there and so we turned up this road and he said "Now you've just got a short way to walk." Well it was right on top of us – we could have spit on it. I got up there and I got to looking back and I said "G.H. there's a tombstone." So we went out thru the woods and we found it. Somebody has kept the underbrush cut off of it. Most of the dates are in the 1800s, what tombstones are there – most of it is just rock for the headstones. It's on a knoll – just a perfect place for it.

PG: Do you know who's family cemetery it was?

JCL: There's some Creasmans there, there's some Lances, there's some Cases.

BH: Case is an old south Buncombe family.

JCL: This is an article that G.H. read in the paper but he hasn't done the first part of it – he didn't give me the first part of it. But anyway some woman has been up there and that's what it's written up about. But the thing that I would like to know – where they lived out there that they went way up in there to bury – you know?

PG: Yeah it's interesting – the old cemeteries.

JCL: And it goes back – I think the last date was 1914 - that we could read. It was a real interesting place to go.

PG: I'm glad to hear that it's preserved – you don't think it's going to be part of the development?

JCL: Evidently not because it's up above it. I didn't even know that they had built a lodge in there. Of course since Calvin died I'm not out there like I used to be.

BH: I've seen the road but I've never been up in there.

JCL: We'll let's go up in there one day. It's amazing.

BH: That's wonderful. We need to do that.

JCL: It must have cost them a fortune to build that road. (laughs) I think what flabbergasted both of us was that there was so much land back in there. It's right up against the Parkway, you know where it comes off there at Bent Creek. Right up above it – right below it and the Parkway's above it. When you go Bill, you go up and you'll see a road that goes to the right – well now that goes out and somebody's got a house back in there. That's not the lodge – you go on up this way. But when you see that one if you'll make a hard right, there's a big old barrel, tin barrel, metal barrel, and it's an old roadway that you could park just as you get on that roadway and just walk out on that knoll and that's where that cemetery is.

BH: How far away is it from the road? Once you turn off the road.

JCL: Maybe a fourth of a mile.

BH: Not that far once you get out there

JCL: No it's not very far. Not far at all. And Calvin and I for years we were going to go. And then he'd get ready to go and the snakes were out and I'd say no way. See this road wasn't built then so heavens so you'd have to gone in up there about where that rifle range is and try to work your way back up in there. It would have just been woods you know. But I would really like to know where the people lived that were buried there.

BH: Well I guess on out the road there I saw the name McBrayer (?) and I think there's a historic marker right there on the right before you turn where Bent Creek Baptist Church – it's got that name on it. He did something the early fight against TB and lived it said about 400 feet – In my experience in the mountains the people for the most part they wouldn't use a good bottom for a cemetery they buried people on top knolls. There may have been some religious significance to that too.

(*500*)JCL: I asked G.H. I said most old cemeteries everybody – there's feet's toward the east. And I said do you know the significance of that? And he said "Well, no I don't Jean" and I said well

cause the Lord's going to come from the east so you want to be able to raise up and see him. All the old cemeteries, but of course the new ones they don't pay any attention to this. But all of these faced the east.

BH: I've got to pay more attention to that.

PG: I hadn't though about that either.

JCL: I don't know – Calvin and I – I'm a member of Abernathy up here – but for 5½ years he wasn't able to go to church so we watched Don Wilton, Spartanburg Baptist. Oh he's wonderful.

(phone call – tape apparently stopped)

JCL: Just beans and cornbread...(laughs).

PG: Well thank you so much.

JCL: Well I've enjoyed this so much – you just don't know how much. Now Bill are you going to let me borrow this?

BH: That's yours I have inscribed it to you. It is your copy and I want you to have that.

JCL: Oh mercy – wonderful. I didn't even know that you had one out.

BH: Just a small way to say thank you.

JCL: Well thank you so much. That's just great. I'll treasure it forever. And this Mr. Brunk! We get the Mountaineer out at Sherry's as well as the Asheville Citizen and I've been so interested in that woman that left all that stuff out there at Waynesville – and he's had to auction.

BH: And I missed the auction.

PG: I wanted to go to that.

BH: They had a two day auction here in Asheville and I missed it and I didn't get to go to it.

JCL: I met somebody out there that had known her. I know where all those buildings are in Waynesville that she had all that stuff in. Of course there's a lot of old buildings that nothing's upstairs in them.

BH: She just collected furniture – did she just like antiques.

JCL: Yes and this person that knew her – and her daughter lives up there close to Sherry somewhere – said that she did it as an investment – she had a lot of money – one day she'd have a lot of money out of them. I couldn't believe all that stuff. There was a lot about it in the Mountaineer.

BH: You're a Methodist and one thing I wanted to say – I go to Skyland and one of the people over there who is the historian for our church and a very dear friend of ours was a woman by the name of Marion Case. Marion Case married when she was maybe 70 or 60 – anyway later in life she was Marion Case Havner (?). From time to time talk to her about her family and the Cases and knew they were an old family and they were very prominent in the area.

JCL: Was she raised in the Bent Creek Area? There's a lot of Cases out there.

BH: The old Case home I think stood off of Sweeten Creek Road – they build a plant there called GTE. But for many years out in front of the plant there was an old well and it had a big willow tree. She said the family story was that her grandfather had ridden in and used a willow switch on his horse and stuck it in the ground by the well –

PG: And it just grew right there.

BH: That's where it came from. She gave my wife a little split oak basket – a minature basket that she was given as gift as a girl about 1907 in Skyland. That is probably the most precious basket we have.

JCL: We were talking about the Creasmans a while a go and there were two Creasman brothers came here originally – they were Scotch-Irish and one of them settled in the Swannanoa area and one of them settled in the Bent Creek Area. In all the places I've ever been you never see any Creasmans. If you do, they're from here.

PG: So you're the homeland.

JCL: I know when Sherry was having her second baby down at (something?) down at Sumpter(?). I got on the elevator when I got there and there was this young man was on there with the name Creasman on his badge. I asked him if he was from Asheville and he said no ma'am I'm from someplace in Arkansas I can't remember where. I said well I bet your daddy's from Asheville and he said "Yes ma'am, from Swannanoa." They're all from here.

JCL: I wonder if we could take a picture of that dogwood covered box – would you mind if we got a photograph and added that to our collection?

BH: I hadn't thought about that – I was going to ask to get a picture of you –

PG: Brought up the camera – I'm sorry (laughter)

END OF TAPE

Jeanne Creasman Lance with Bill Hart and Peggy Gardner discussing photographer George Masa

3/25/2000

Notes from tape made in Jeanne Lance's kitchen at 42 Wilshire Drive, West Asheville

-- discusses her family history, from Bent Creek area, her father, Oscar Creasman, worked at Biltmore Estate in the cabinet shop -- states if Masa also worked there, she is sure her father would have been the reason

-- states her father and George Masa were born the same year, 1881, George's birth date 1/20/1881.

-- believes Masa came to this area because of TB, stayed at a sanitarium in Swannanoa or Black Mtn.

-- says her father and brother (Blake) met Masa when they all worked on a Pigeon Farm, does not know much about it other than people at that time ate alot of pigeons

-- George had a brother here with him, who she thinks went home to Japan, states that she had always heard they were from a wealthy family

-- says George fell so in love with these mountains that he wouldn't go back to Japan, "so his Daddy disowned him, cut him off" -- had nothing, died with nothing

-- says he probably didn't pay rent, her family was poor, they just "brought him in"

-- discusses family home, located at 615 Brookshire St. Says Helen Boone owned it at one time, house still stands, Jeanne was born there

-- not sure how long George lived with her family

-- thinks she was a baby when he left, based on the photos (she was born in 1925) -- she is not shown with him

-- if he came around 1915, no knowledge or record

-- city directory listings discussed, his residence lists as Biltmore on different occasions

-- photo of her on Church St. around 1929 or 1930 -- says right before they moved to the Arcade, she remembers being in that place, says they lost the business during the Depression

-- asked about brother Blake, (who was 21 when she was born, born 1904) always heard that they started their business on Biltmore Ave., not sure of their business relationship or how long

-- discusses Juanita Wilson, says Blake and George trained her and got her started in business

-- does not know who trained George and Blake, says definitely not her father, assumes George trained Blake -- also her sister Blance worked with them, she colored pictures (shows example of hydrangeas)

-- Blanche was 24 when Jeanne was born, and had a year and a half old child -- (Blanche Creasman Moore, married to George Hanford Moore, first cousin of Babe Ruth!) -- does not know how long she worked with them

-- Blake became an electrician (with Swanger) she's not sure what he did in the interim (after the Depression) -- died when he was 64 -- did not go back to photography

-- does not know anything about Don Topping, who Hart says bought George's business

-- she had heard of Eliot Fisher, says he didn't give George credit, put his own name on his photographs -- says Swicegood at Little Pigs had two that Fisher had claimed -- says they were panoramas of mountains, her family had some, too, but she doesn't know where they are

-- does not have knowledge of the numbering system

-- MA006 -- George with ?? doesn't know

-- MA013 -- with her cousin Leila, who lived with her family, Medling her last name,

-- MA005 -- her sister Doris

-- MA017 -- jump ropers, Doris on right, Ruby jumping rope, others neighbors, can date it from the old school house photo, which burned down, shows that the school in photo is one who took its place -- the old grammar school at Biltmore, now torn down, was beside the present one -- her sister Ruby was 17 and Doris 11 when she was born. She was the baby, and the only one living now. Discusses location of her home in relation to the picture.

-- MA010 -- how to date -- probably 1920 or 1921

-- MA020 -- her sister Blanche and sister Ruby, Blanche holding camera

-- MA008 -- ?? doesn't know

-- MA004 -- Blanche lived there somewhere, he might have been there visiting, she lived in Boston, doesn't know about Virginia, (shows another photo similar format, shows George in canoe, taken at same time)

-- MA007 -- in her home, in his room she thinks

-- MA014 -- her father, in shop in the village, not on Estate, Mrs. Vanderbilt brought artisans from Italy to teach, called it the cabinet shop,

-- does not know of any Masa woodworking, artifacts

-- MA018 -- Leila, Blanche, Doris and Ruby on the Biltmore Estate

-- MA009 -- doesn't know the other men

-- MA016 -- made on Brevard Rd, Cary Morris, wife and daughter, now Tom Thrash owns land, house was where flea market that didn't fly was,

-- old Biltmore church -- her mother's Sunday School class, names some in picture

-- states that she thinks George took most of the family album photos

-- father did alot of the carving in the library at Biltmore

-- no other photographers in family, doesn't know about Blake's negatives

-- says her brother rode with Hubert Hays to NYC on a motorcycle, upset her mom

-- doesn't know of any romantic interests of Masa, nor of any trouble he might have gotten into

-- wonders about the racial aspect, whether it caused her family any problems, but doesn't know, never heard anything said about it

-- doesn't know anything about Pelton

-- doesn't shed any light on George's comment about "getting over the Creasman family" -- she never heard any discussions about why he left, thinks she would have heard if it hadn't been a friendly parting

-- talks about his funeral, her impressions

end of side A

Side B

-- Mrs. Lance and Peggy discuss handling of the scrapbook, Mrs. Lance says "take them, they'll just go into the trash"

-- resume discussion of her vivid memories of Masa's funeral, remembers it was pouring rain, talks of her friend's father who was buried right next to Masa, remembers a crowd at his funeral, she was eight, black umbrellas

-- Hart asks about military uniform in some photos in scrapbook identifies as her uncle Roy, her mother's brother

-- says again to take them, "if I want to see them, I'll come to look at them"

-- Gardner tells of the library's forming separate "Masa" collection

-- Hart says he thinks his funeral was at Central Methodist

-- photo inside her house she identifies as Masa photographer

-- talk about 1916 flood photos

-- asked if she remembers flood damage at her home, she says they were in no danger, but remembers her family knew some of the people drowned

-- talks about photos, says one is of her mother and Masa in the yard

-- discusses her clipping file on Masa

-- Gardner asks if she can take them to the library, Lance says okay, but would like the ones of her family back

-- talks about photo of her grandfather, Carlin?, a logger, who at one time had a camp in the Pink Beds

-- does not know about the 'typical Civil War' house

-- Hart thanks her for adding new dimension to Masa's life study, talks about the previous knowledge of him, says that her information has shed light on another era of his life

-- says she does not know where they went to school (Masa and his brother) but that she had always heard they came to go to school

-- says the Pigeon Farm was on Sweeten Creek Road

-- thought that it was rather odd if he was a recovering TB patient, why was he working around feathers?

-- states that the rest of her family is not interested in the materials

-- says baby photo is her, identifies more photos of family, the old home place one with calves

-- doesn't know if the Vanderbilt wedding photos are by Masa, assumes they were

-- discussion of the newspaper clippings

-- talks about an old cemetary with some of her family, near where the Parkway comes out at Bent Creek, describes it in detail

-- talks about the Creasman family history, they were Scotch-Irish, says there were two brothers who came here, one settled in Swannanoa, one in Bent Creek, says all the Creasmans she's ever met come from here, gives anecdotes

-- tape ends with thank yous all around